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THE ARCHER



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CARS & COURIERS

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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Angad Singh, left, and Satnam Singh with their marathon medals. Photo Kevin Meredith.

Faith and war

Two British Sikhs ran the Brighton Marathon in April to commemorate the lives and sacrifices of the British Indian Army who fought during the Great War.

Angad Singh and Satnam Singh were both dressed in authentic Indian Army uniform and managed to finish the full 26.2 miles together, stride for stride, in under five hours.

The pair were running for the UK Punjab Heritage Association, a charity raising awareness about the Sikhs and World War One through their project Empire, Faith & War (www.empirefaithwar.com).

Angad, who lives off Squires Lane, N3, said: "The marathon was gruelling given the heaviness of the kit we were wearing and the strong midday sun. As an amateur runner it's definitely the toughest challenge I've completed but it was an honour to commemorate the long tradition of Anglo-Sikh ties and those wartime soldiers in particular."

Better, bigger, brighter: it's Festival 2015!

By Roger Chapman

This summer's East Finchley community festival on Sunday 21 June between noon and 6pm in Cherry Tree Wood promises to be better, brighter and bigger.

Packed line ups will fill each stage and there will be more than 80 stalls, inflatable slides, a climbing wall, Punch and Judy, a story-telling tent for the under-fives and plenty of activities and fun.

Visitors are welcome to start the day with a nice stroll at 11.30am from Martin Primary School, Plane Tree Walk, where the festival procession will set off along the High Road towards Cherry Tree Wood with music and Morris dancers.

Find out more online at www.iloven2.co.uk and keep up with the latest festival news on Facebook at www.facebook.com/East.Finchley.Festival

Lining up for you

Here are the line-ups for the two festival stages. The East Finchley favourites playing on the main stage, all hosted by DJ Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock, with times to be confirmed, will be:

The Lucky Strikes, Sofasonic, Los Ricochet, Crash Island, Dean Staker, Obsession, Rob Thom Band, Jones 2.0, Lisa's Changed Scratch.

Meanwhile, The Archer Community Stage will be home to some very special local talent of all ages:

- 12pm: Archer Academy
- 12.15pm: Fortitude Dance Company
- 12.35pm: Airborne Circus
- 12.55pm: Erin - Michael Jackson Dance
- 1pm: Elsa - Songs and Music
- 1.10pm: London Metropolitan Brass Training Band
- 1.35pm: North London Ukelele Club
- 2pm: Belles of London City - Morris Dancers
- 2.25pm: Finchley Youth Theatre & Soto Dance Company
- 2.50pm: A-Chord Choir
- 3.15pm: Fixation Theatre Company
- 3.35pm: S.O.U.P. Ukulele Club
- 4.05pm: The Long String Hawkers
- 4.35pm: Finchley Steel Orchestra
- 5pm: I Talk to Strangers
- 5.25pm: Cecilia Holmes
- 5.45pm: Jazz Guitar Ensemble

Outstanding result

Congratulations to all staff, parents and pupils at Holy Trinity Primary School in Eagans Close which was recently rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

With Martin and Brookland Primary Schools already holding the same rating, it means the people of N2 can be very proud of all their primary schools.

Race ace

All 250 places on the inaugural Race the Neighbours 10k event between East Finchley and Muswell Hill (THE ARCHER, May 2015) have been taken. Good luck to all the runners setting off from Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 7 June and here's hoping this local challenge becomes an annual event.

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Comments to THE ARCHER may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

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Council Tax 020 8359 2608
Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600
Primary Care Trust 020 8201 4700
Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500
Employment Service 020 8258 3900

Haringey Council

Leisure
Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library 020 8883 2664
Gt North Leisure Park 0870 240 6020
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Tourist Info Service 0870 128 8080
Warner Cinema Village 020 8446 9933

Transport

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City Airport 020 7646 0088
London Transport 020 7222 1234
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Help & Advice

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Lone Parent Centre 020 7021 4146
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NSPCC 0800 800500
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Planning bid: The Shisha bar and restaurant in Church Lane.

Worries over shisha bar

By Janet Maitland

A number of residents are objecting to plans to open a restaurant and shisha bar in the old Alexandra pub at the end of Church Lane, N2.

The plans for the building include a large extension, made up of 'canopy structures', which will back onto houses on Leopold Road. These structures, which are not fully enclosed or covered, will be used for restaurant seating and for a bar, where customers will be able to smoke tobacco in shisha or hookah pipes.

Concerns about disturbance

Although some Leopold Road residents have no objections, others are very concerned. They are worried about noise, both from customers using the extension and from any entertainment the owner might provide, especially as the restaurant's alcohol licence may mean the premises are open during the day as well as the evening.

Residents also think tobacco smoke and smells from the kitchen will be a nuisance. And there's an issue of whether a tobacco bar should be opened so near to Martin Primary School, less than 100m away across the High Road.

"I don't object to the opening of a restaurant per se," said one Leopold Road resident, who has made a formal objection to the council. "However, I've asked the council to consider how to mitigate the potential

for disturbance by alterations to the plans and restrictions on the use of the property." Ten other people have also objected to the council.

The council informed *THE ARCHER* in May that a decision will be made "very soon". To view the planning application, go to <https://publicaccess.barnet.gov.uk/online-applications> and enter the planning application reference number 15/01019/FUL.

Bike theft falls flat

An interesting tale of lost and found reaches us from Bike & Run in the High Road. Tony Wade there tells us that one of their regular customers was unlucky enough to have his bike stolen locally.

The thief turned out to be unlucky too because the bike got a puncture. And where did he take it to get it fixed but Bike & Run?

As soon as it came through the door, Tony recognised the bike and realised it was stolen property. He asked another member of staff to stall the repair while he contacted the true owner.

Tony tells us: "Luckily he answered his phone. When I told the lad that the bike wasn't going anywhere whilst the police made investigations he made a swift exit, without the bike!"

All of which goes to prove that shopping locally where traders know their customers really pays off... as long as you're on the straight and narrow.

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

46 Bedford Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

17 Durham Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension following partial demolition of existing rear projection.

257 East End Road, N2

Roof extension, including rear dormer.

62 Hertford Road, N2

Conversion of two flats into two semi-detached houses, involving part single/part two-storey side and rear extension, following demolition of rear conservatory. Roof extension, including increased ridge height, two rear dormers, five front roof lights, new front access steps, refuse/recycling facilities, and associated alterations.

381 High Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer and two front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion. Single-storey rear extension.

44 Kitchener Road, N2

Replacement of existing single-glazed steel framed windows and doors with new double-glazed windows and doors with UPVC frames.

10 Leopold Road, N2

Lawful Development Certificate

for Extension to roof including hip to gable, rear dormer and two front roof lights to facilitate a loft conversion.

Upper flat, 338 Long Lane, N2

Roof extension, including hip to gable, rear dormer with Juliette balcony, and three front roof lights.

McFadden Court, 72 Market Place, N2

Roof extension, including rear dormer, six rear roof lights, and front recessed terrace to facilitate conversion into one self-contained flat.

6 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension following part demolition of existing extension.

33 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension

51st Mayor takes office

Councillor Mark Shooter has been sworn into office as the 51st Mayor of Barnet.

Councillor Shooter has represented Hendon ward since being elected to Barnet Council in 2010. He grew up in Edgware before moving to Hendon, where he has lived for the last 30 years.

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Brownies pack desperately needs a new leader

By Ella Dorrell

The 4th East Finchley Brownies pack will sadly need to close after this term if they cannot secure a new volunteer. The current girls would have to find a place at another group some distance away and girls on the long waiting list may not be able to join the girl guiding family.

The current leader, Lisa Attfield, has been involved with the pack for nearly 10 years, starting as additional help to the group before taking the leader role fully. However due to other commitments she is no longer able to lead the group.

The Brownies pack is part of a division. There is support from the district commissioner, and opportunities to join in activities organised at district and national level.

really enjoyed my time leading the group, and have had many lovely experiences. Some of the highlights have been Brownie sleepovers, adventure holidays, boating at Welsh Harp, pond dipping at Golders Hill, visits from guide dogs, theatre trips, learning archery and climbing and Easter egg hunts at Cherry Tree.

"I have been lucky that the girls have come from a variety of schools. One of the best things has been the opportunity to watch as the girls make new friends, develop an understanding of working together as a team, and develop in confidence."

The Brownie group currently meets in term time on Thursday evenings from 5:30pm to 7pm at St Mary's church hall. The session can be adjusted to suit the new leader. No one will be expected to take on the group without support from Lisa, the district commissioner, and other volunteers.

If you want to discuss further, email Alison Johns, district commissioner at alison-mjohns@gmail.com. For more information visit www.girl-guiding.co.uk



The 4th East Finchley pack have organised activities so that the girls can earn Brownie badges. They also raise money for various charities, learn about the world around them, and think about others.

Lisa Attfield said: "I have

Car boot sale

Vale Farm Horticultural Society is inviting everyone to its next car boot and table top sale to help raise funds for its allotments off Tarling Road, N2, on Sunday 14 June from 11am to 4pm.

Go along to the allotments to browse, get to know plot holders, ask for gardening advice, share a tea/coffee and cake and of course grab a bargain from sellers.

If you are interested in having a table yourself contact Lyndsay at Lyndsay@valefarm.org or Janine at Janine@valefarm.org



Danny Lothian with some of his huge Lego collection. Photo Mike Coles

Trains and boats and planes: all in my bedroom

Cars, trucks, helicopters and diggers, eight-year-old Danny Lothian has them all. The Martin Primary pupil has constructed a massive collection of more than 150 Lego models that's completely taking over his bedroom at home in East End Road.

"I buy lots of them myself," says Danny. "I save my pocket money and I do jobs like cutting the grass to earn more money."

"Lego is all over my shelves

and I may have to get some new shelves to put all the models on, or hang them from the ceiling. I build all the models on my own. I love it and I can do kits meant

for 12-year-olds."

Danny, who's also learning Thai boxing and ju-jitsu at East Finchley Combat Academy in Church Lane, says his favourite Lego model is his Simpsons house, a really big model home that opens up at the front.

His mum Carol adds: "Lego is all Danny ever asks for at Christmas and birthdays."

Tesco's coming – but not to East Finchley

By Janet Maitland

When we heard a rumour that Tesco is planning to open a store on the site of the Esso garage at 217 High Road, we decided to investigate. A spokesperson from Barnet Council informed us that they had not received a planning application from Tesco for this site and that they were "not aware of any intention to apply."

We asked Tesco if they were planning to build a store at the garage site or anywhere else in East Finchley. A spokesperson told us: "We are planning on building an Express store in East Finchley and are looking forward to becoming part of the local community. We're confident our store will be popular with customers as it would offer a wide range of products in a convenient location and create around 20 jobs for local people."

We asked Tesco to check the exact location of this store. We also went back to the council to inform them that, according to Tesco, a store *would* be opening in East Finchley. "Our planning

teams are not aware of any intention to submit a planning application for a Tesco Express in East Finchley," insisted a council spokesperson.

Mixed messages

Tesco then notified us that the address of the East Finchley store would be 770 High Road, North Finchley, N12. We pointed out that East and North Finchley are different places. Some time later they got back to say: "We're going ahead with the store in North Finchley, *not* East Finchley, and apologise for the confusion."

Mr Mohan, the manager of the Esso garage, declined to make any comment to the press.

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Marchers listen to speeches at East Finchley library before setting off for Church End. Photo Mike Coles

Strength of feeling over saving libraries

By Daphne Chamberlain

The public consultation exercise may be over, but the campaign to protect our libraries continues. After a series of magnificent marches around the borough, some accompanied by the London Metropolitan Brass Band, like the one that departed from East Finchley library in mid-May, nobody can doubt how important our libraries are to us.

East Finchley Library Users Group (EFLUG) have been at the forefront of this campaign, and we are posting here some news from EFLUG's Polly Napper.

Council decision

"You may remember that we were anticipating a proposal from the council to come this summer. We understand now that the decision has been postponed until September.

Appeal for funds

"Publicity (for the marches) will use the last of the funds we have accumulated to help our campaign. If you are able to

donate please send payments to East Finchley Community Trust, who are holding donations on our behalf. Please make it clear that you're donating for the library (so they keep our funds separate from those of other groups). You can donate by **electronic transfer**: Sort code: 08-92-99; Account number: 65444614; Reference 'Library', or by **cheque** made payable to 'East Finchley Community Trust' and sent to: 50 Summerlee Avenue, East Finchley, London, N2 9QP. Please make clear in any covering letter/note that the cheque is for the Library Campaign."



Marching to save the libraries. Photo Mike Coles

Young volunteers at the library

If you are aged 14-18 and will have some spare time during your summer holidays, East Finchley library is seeking volunteers to help run its Summer Reading Challenge, which encourages younger children aged four to 11 to read six books over the summer.

Volunteers only need to spare eight hours across the whole summer and their role includes signing children up to the scheme, giving out stickers and prizes as they read their books and helping with planned activities. In return, library staff can give them a reference and their hours will count towards the DofE scheme.

For an application form, contact Lucy Merritt on 020 8359 4411 or email lucy.merritt@barnet.gov.uk. You can also download it from www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/libraries/teenage-library-services and return it by email or via the library. Applications are requested by Monday 15 June.

Letter to the Editor

Library plea

Mary Beer-Cleasby sent this letter to Barnet Council and invited us to print it too.

Dear Councillors

Thank you so much for your public service. I am sure it cannot be easy to govern in these difficult times. I am sure you are all good men and women of conscience and I am grateful for the work you do for our community. I am sure you care about not only the present day but the future.

Whether you're left or right or somewhere in between, I sincerely hope you can come to understand that libraries are all the more relevant and vital in the current age. As they are amongst the last remaining public spaces, they are promoters of pro-social behaviour and thus by definition act as weapons against anti-social behaviour.

They serve to inspire children to love books, learning and therefore reasoning and original thought. These qualities are on one hand priceless for their own sake but on the other hand very sound investments for the future because an intelligent, inspired and creative population is precisely the advantage a modern economy needs to compete on the global stage.

By keeping them within walking distance, you are encouraging children to walk and thus making a contribution to their physical health which, as I'm sure you all know, will save the NHS millions in the future if we have a fitter population, habituated to travelling on foot. By giving people of all ages a place within easy reach that fosters a sense of community, you are fighting the loneliness that is such a threat in this ever-isolated, digital age.

Old fashioned books make children curious and want to reach higher. And for that they need to browse and leaf through them in a physical environment.

Please see attached a picture of my son at the East Finchley Public Library which is without question his favourite place in the world and to which, at age two, he is able to travel on foot with me from nursery or from



home. He is literally reaching higher to learn. Please don't take that away from him.

Yours faithfully,
Mary Beer-Cleasby,
Address supplied.

Flower show and fancy hats

A busy month for Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society and its members. For anyone who would like to enter for the summer flower show, entry night is on Tuesday 9 June, 7pm to 8pm, at Fellowship House, Willifield Way, NW11. Members are always present to advise first-timers.

The flower show itself takes place at the Free Church Hall, Northway, NW11, from 3pm to 5.30pm on Saturday 13 June, with home-made teas, raffle and a fancy dress competition for children and a fancy hats competition for adults. This year the theme for both is 'bugs and butterflies'. Entry for non-members is £2 (free for members, under-18s and anyone wearing fancy dress or a fancy hat).

Sunday 28 June sees many Horticultural Society members' gardens, large and small, open to the public around the Suburb from 2pm to 6pm. Proceeds will be shared jointly between The North London Hospice and the Horticultural Society (to fund future projects). Tickets cost £7.50 and tickets and maps will be available from 12 noon on the day from Fellowship House, where refreshments and plants will be on sale. Details of other events and how to join can be found at www.hortsoc.co.uk.

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Swap shop for the growing season

Gardeners brought along their spare plants and seeds, and took away cuttings in return during the annual Seed and Plant Swap organised by the East Finchley Community Trust in mid-April. There was a brisk trade in all things green, although no money changed hands, for two hours at Martin Primary School.

Friends of Cherry Tree Wood get busy

By Debbie Linton

East Finchley charity Friends of Cherry Tree Wood is enjoying a new lease of life. Last month they had a very positive meeting with the Greenspaces Department of Barnet Council. Subjects discussed included liaising more effectively with the council over concerns such as graffiti, litter and security.

A new woodland management plan was also discussed, as were some short term conservation projects such as coppicing to help rejuvenate the woodland. There are also plans for the charity to liaise more effectively with other very successful Friends groups in the area.

Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are taking a stall at the East Finchley Festival on 21 June. This is an opportunity to inform them about your ideas, concerns and views. Let them know if you can help with

conservation work, tell them about the types of events you would like them to hold, and help them identify any recreational facilities that could be improved.

They would welcome new members or committee members who wish to support the charity and especially those who see this as an opportunity to make a difference to our local neighbourhood. You can visit the website at www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or get in touch at info@cherrytreewood.co.uk

Shop assistance

Doing a food shop can be a difficult task if you are unable to get out and about easily or carry heavy bags home.

East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) is now recruiting for its new shopping service, starting this month. Shoppers will be matched with those who either need a hand to get to the shops, or would like their shopping done for them and unpacked at home.

Shoppers will be fully checked and supported whilst taking part in the service. If you can help out once a week, or need help with your shopping, contact Lisa Smith at EFAB on 07909 998453.

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Emma stands the heat in the Masterchef kitchen

Millions of viewers last month watched Emma Spitzer battle through to the final of TV's toughest cooking challenge, Masterchef. Emma, of Shakespeare Gardens, N2, is managing director of a luxury travel business and married with four young daughters. We asked how she coped with the stress of the competition and those cutting remarks from judges Gregg Wallace and John Torode.

THE ARCHER: Emma, what made you put your name down for Masterchef?

Emma: I wanted to follow a career in food, if I was good enough. It's the most intense thing I've ever done. I had no idea what I was in for. If I had I don't think I would have entered. I've watched it for 10 years but you have no idea how tough it is: the constant state of nerves, the fear of putting yourself on national television to be scrutinised. It's refreshing (but terrifying) that the judges are so brutally honest, unlike friends and family who are usually nice to me when I feed them.

And how did you do?

I made it to the final and I was runner-up. But that's not the end of it. I've been overwhelmed by the level of interest in my style of modern, Middle Eastern and North African cooking and I'd love to do a book. I really want to cook for people. I'm looking for venues to do pop-ups and have been approached to do private dining for people.

What was filming like?

I started filming my first heat in November last year and it went through to January. There was constant preparation and practice to be ready for the next round. I gave myself three days off for Christmas, but even then I was still cooking.

What kind of reaction did you get from being on the show?

What I found lovely about East Finchley is that there's such a community spirit. I had so much support wherever I went, in cafes or getting on the tube. People recognised



Chef special: Emma Spitzer.

me and were so pleased I was doing well.

Have you always liked cooking?

I've been cooking for about 25 years; I started young! I wasn't very well behaved in school but Home Economics was one lesson I never skipped. I really looked forward to it and would even say I was teacher's

pet. I loved taking in a bag of ingredients and coming out with a dish of something; it was very satisfying.

Finally, what would be your dish to impress?

That would be spice-rubbed beef short ribs with a Persian rice dish called chelow, followed by sticky toffee pudding and vanilla ice cream.

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VE Day Phoenix-style. Photo by Maurita Van Droogenbroeck

Phoenix turns back the clock

For one night only, the Phoenix Cinema spooled back in time to its previous incarnation as The Rex to help celebrate the 70th anniversary of VE Day at the start of May.

There were plenty of 'Sentimental Journeys' and everyone was 'In the Mood', many dressed in 1940s style, to enjoy a Victory in Europe street party and a special screening of the new movie A Royal Night Out, which follows the stories of Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret on VE Day in 1945.

Balloons, bubble guns, bottles and bones

By Daphne Chamberlain

Weather obeyed orders for last month's VE Day party in Stephens (Avenue) House. The sun shone for picnickers on the lawn, strollers round the grounds, visitors to the Bothy Garden and its new cafe, Maypole dancing children, and Sea Cadets going through their paces.

If you were among them, you may know the answer to this question: If you found a Johnnie Walker whisky bottle said to be from 1907, how would you know it was a fake? Answer: Before 1908, it would only be marked as Walker's Kilmarnock Whiskies.

That was useful knowledge for HADAS (Hendon and District Archaeological Society), who were among the local stall-holders on parade. HADAS have unearthed a hoard of whisky, gin and brandy bottles in the grounds of Stephens House.

Were their contents drunk by doctors, nurses, patients? Other finds include medicine bottles, pottery and animal bones. The bones suggest that some birds, sheep and cattle might have been kept in the grounds as food supplies, when Stephens House was the RAF Central Hospital from 1915 to 1925.



The Phoenix and Stephens House both marked VE Day.

Photo by Maurita Van Droogenbroeck

Last month it was a happy place of balloons and bubble guns, with the band playing "On the Sunny Side of the Street". Guns of a different kind gave it a more serious aspect during both World Wars.

New events this summer

From 1 July to 30 September, the basement will go back to WW2, when Stephens House

was the Finchley ARP headquarters. (Some of the recent WW1 exhibits will stay.) Any personal recollections or memorabilia for loan or offer will be very welcome, as will offers to steward.

There will also be an opportunity to grow vegetables in a Dig for Victory patch in the grounds.

Contact Fiona Harkus on 020 8346 7812 for details.

Old Barn: how to have your say

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Council will submit a planning application about the Old Barn community centre in N2, some time during June. Their proposals include building a new wing primarily for the local Somali Bravanese community, whose centre on Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill, was burnt down in a racist arson attack in June 2013.

If you live within 100 metres of the Old Barn, you'll be contacted by the council once the application has been made and you'll then have four weeks to comment. But even if you don't live close by, you can still participate in the consultation once the application has been submitted.

You can check if it has or not by going to <https://publicaccess.barnet.gov.uk/online-applications/> and entering the centre's address, which is 20 Fallow's Close, East Finchley,

London N2 8LG. If you have comments about the plans for the centre, write to the Planning Department, Barnet Council, 4 North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP.

At the time of going to press, those involved in the additional consultation were not able to say if outstanding issues, such as whether the council has the right to build on the land adjacent to the Old Barn, given its history as protected green space, had yet been resolved.

Coffee and chat

A friendly weekly coffee and chat group meets on Mondays from 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Bald Faced Stag in the High Road, N2.

Organisers EFAB Friends say everyone is welcome to drop in for however long they like. Visitors are asked to use the garden entrance as the main doors to the pub may be locked. For more details contact Lisa Smith on 07909 998453 or email: us@efab.org.uk

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Runner earns first donation from Grange Big Local

Grange Big Local is a community association which has secured £1 million of Big Lottery funding to help and support the community in East Finchley. Over the past 18 months local residents have been working together, and with community groups, to write a plan for how to spend the money over the next 10 years.

Their first donation, of £1,000, went to Age UK Barnet, as sponsorship for Nic van der Breggen who ran the London Marathon on behalf of the charity.

It was Nic's first marathon and he ran it with jetlag, having flown back from a work placement in Australia only days earlier. Incredibly, he crossed the finishing line in just 3:58:17.

Pat Murphy, chair of Grange Big Local, said: "We have been

working with Age UK Barnet, along with other voluntary groups, over the past year. Age UK Barnet have kindly let us use their centre, the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, for meetings without charge. The committee decided we wanted to support this cause and say thank you."

For more information on Grange Big Local visit www.grangebiglocal.org or find them on Facebook and Twitter.



Made it! Nic van der Breggen after running the London Marathon.

The importance of being playful

A new after-school club is running at Martin Primary School. Here, owner Fiona Doyle explains the importance of play.

Chances are some of your happiest memories of your own childhood are of playing with friends or siblings; perhaps climbing trees, chasing, games of football or imaginary adventures.

Play time is a fundamental part of childhood yet time to play is becoming less of a priority. There is endlessly increasing pressure on schools, parents and educational agencies to ensure that children make the maximum academic progress in as short a time as possible.

Extensive studies show how play can help develop children's emotional intelligence and communication skills as well as physical agility and coordination. Aleta, 11, from Martin Primary School, says: "You get exercise while enjoying yourself." Isabelle, also 11, adds: "It can teach children things they can't learn in a classroom."

LBL After School Club, a new out-of-school play provision at Martin School, embraces



From the top: Izzy, Aleta and Isaac at the after school club.

the philosophies of play and advocates giving children the freedom to be creative and imaginative. The club was launched in April and so far the response has been wonderfully positive.

Monty Worley, a play worker at LBL, has seen how important it is for children to be able to

let off steam at the end of a busy school day. "When children play without the direct intervention of adults they learn how to share, to care for one another and also how to be kind to others."

Play leader Sam Cleary has seen what children can get up to when left to their own devices. "When we opened the new club we brought in a huge box full of new toys and equipment for the children to play with. The new equipment was discarded and the children spent the whole session crawling in and out of the box, drawing and colouring all over it and taping it up when it burst apart!"

Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned for all parents. It is just as important to allow your children to play as it is to get their homework done, their rooms cleaned and their greens eaten!

LBL After School Club runs from 3.30pm to 6pm every day during term time and also runs holiday play schemes. It has six full-time members of staff, plus supply staff for busy sessions, and caters for up to 70 children at one time.

Circus coming to town

The circus is the theme for this year's Highgate Fair in the Square on Saturday 13 June running from 12.30pm to 5.30pm in Pond Square and South Grove, London N6. Admission is free and thousands flock to this annual fun day of music, live performances, stalls, fair rides, children's creative activities and traditional attractions, such as Morris Dancers, Punch & Judy and the ever-popular Sheep Show.

Over 20 circus artists from Jacksons Lane will conduct skills workshops for all ages and perform juggling, trampoline and balancing acts throughout the afternoon from a new third stage on the grassy knoll in front of The Flask pub.

The Hornsey School for

Girls Steel Band opens the fair to create the carnival spirit, whilst the cast of *There's a Guy Works Down the Chip Shop Swears He's Elvis* playing at Upstairs at the Gatehouse will perform numbers from the show. More details from www.fairinthesquare.co.uk

The umbrella you can't lose

Are you one of the 12,000 people whose umbrellas end up in TFL Lost Property every day? If so, would you fancy the new high-tech Kisha brolly that can not only predict rain, but will also remind you if you are about to leave it behind? Quirky but creepy? Don't worry, it all works through a smartphone app.

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Hot stuff!

A group of Archer Academy students are pictured at the Royal Albert Hall just before their performance at the Barnet Arts Education Trust event on 23 April. The school was chosen to provide the choir and narrators for the debut performance of Pete Yarde Martin's choral and orchestral work 'George and the Dragon'. Parents and teachers report that they did a fantastic job.



In good voice: The winning Vox choir from Coldfall Primary

Singing stars take gold

Vox, the all-boys choir at Coldfall Primary School, took first prize in the North London Music Festival at St James's Church in Muswell Hill, winning a gold medal for each of the boys and £100 for the school.

The choir faced stiff competition of an extremely high standard from a host of other primary school choirs in the area. Each performed two songs to a packed audience of over 500 people. Vox performed Diamonds by Josef Salvat and Thinking Out Loud by Ed Sheeran.

The judges said: "Vox was outstanding. They sang with arrangements which showcased both the collective and individual talents of the boys involved. It was a truly excellent

performance."

Vox is a non-competitive choir which includes any boy who wants to join from years 4 - 6. It currently has 29 members and is run by teaching assistants Joelle Phillips and Warren Castle.

Joelle said: "We are so delighted at this result. It has been an absolute pleasure to help this incredible group of boys achieve something that many could only dream of. At the start of the year, many of our boys were very shy, far from the powerful voices we saw on stage."

Frankie Badaesonyi, aged eight, said: "We practised really hard and I really loved being given the chance to take part. We learned lots about singing and harmonies. I'm so happy we won."

Ben takes the rap

Ben Hains, 17, won the MC Trophy at this year's Boroughs United event at the Hackney Empire. Ben, of Hertford Road, is a rapper, using only his own material, and he won in front of a packed theatre of 1,600 people. The judges awarded him the trophy for his performance and the lyrical content.

Ben is a full-time student at the DJ and MC Academy in Bounds Green and also provides DJ-ing, beatboxing and rapping workshops in companies, schools and colleges.

Boroughs United is staged annually, bringing together children and young adults from every borough of London to showcase their skills in dancing, singing, and the spoken word.



Winner: Ben Hains with his Boroughs United trophy.

Triple joy for young music makers

Three groups from the Hampstead Garden Suburb-based Youth Music Centre had wins in the 2015 Spring Grove Music Festival and took home a cash prize of £750.

These young musicians meet every Saturday morning for orchestral playing, theory, voice lessons and Choir. The centre takes children from as young as 24 months into their highly successful Junior Musicianship classes.

The centre is now looking for keen wind players and is holding an assessment day on 7 June at Stephens House, East End Road. More details from www.youthmusiccentre.org

PARENT & BABY/CHILD ACTIVITIES

- **MusicalTots:** Wednesdays 11am at the Old White Lion and Fridays 11am at The Five Bells N2. [Katemusicaltots on facebook.](https://www.facebook.com/katemusicaltots)
- **Phoenix Cinema activities,** Bringing up baby screenings, Weds, 11am; Kids Club, Sat, 12pm; Toddler Time, Tues, 11am. Full details from box office on 020 8444 6789.
- **Stepping Stones,** music and play for 0-3s. Tues 10am, East Finchley Baptist Church. Liz 07836 284538.
- **Teddy Bears' Music,** singing for 0-3s in Holy Trinity Church, N2; Thurs 9.45am & 10.45am. Camilla 07900 988149.

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Thriller writer brings a real-world twist

By Nick Young

An East Finchley resident is set to bring out her first novel after setting up her own publishing company. Jane Hankin, of Huntingdon Road, who writes under her maiden name Jane Brittan, founded Blowfish Books with fellow-writer Lisa Taylor after they met on a creative writing course at Birkbeck College.

Jane's debut novel, *The Edge of Me*, will be the new company's first book. It is a young adult thriller about a Finchley schoolgirl who is dragged from

"I wanted to write something that would have resonance for young people," she told *THE ARCHER*. "They know all about the Second World War from school but they have been taught nothing about what happened a generation ago."

A time to remember

Jane researched her novel by contacting the International Committee on Missing Persons, an intergovernmental organisation based in Sarajevo which assists in locating mass graves from the 1990s.

"There are still many missing people out there," she says. The novel's publication is very timely, as 2015 sees the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, in which over 8,000 civilians were murdered by Bosnian Serb forces, and the Dayton Agreement which ended the war.

Jane is able to run Blowfish Books from home as most of the work is done online, with the books being printed in the Czech Republic. She plans to publish her second novel, the first of a trilogy, later this year.

The Edge of Me will be launched at the Cato Gallery on Heath Street, Hampstead at 6.30pm on 10 June. Further details about Blowfish Books and their forthcoming publications can be found on the company's website: www.blowfishbooks.com.



First words: Jane with her debut novel published by her new company.

her seemingly ordinary suburban life to a Serbian orphanage where she confronts the truth about her family's past in the Bosnian War of the 1990s.

Jane has vivid memories of watching the war in Bosnia – the most brutal conflict in Europe since 1945 – on the television news. When she set about writing in earnest she decided to write something for young adults.

She has always enjoyed young adult fiction herself but with a contemporary, real-world twist, and Bosnia has provided the background for that.



Antony Alexandrou's winning photo.

Wedding winner

Antony Alexandrou, who lives on the Great North Road, N2, won the title of **Wedding Photographer of the Year** with this stunning photo of doves being released over a wedding party in Richmond.

Antony, whose company is called 3A photography, said of the Event Photography Awards: "It was a big surprise and also very humbling to be recognised for what I do by the industry."

Open garden

An award-winning garden lovingly tended by Caroline and David Broome will open to visitors on Sunday 14 June from 2pm to 6pm as part of the National Gardens Scheme.

The couple's garden at 79 Church Lane, N2, is packed with ornaments, musical water features and interesting borders, as well as a shed roof garden.

Afternoon tea and home-made cakes will be on offer, along with plants for sale and a raffle. Entrance is £3.50, children free, with all proceeds going to the National Gardens Scheme.

He also scooped second prize on the night for an image of a groom being thrown in the air by his best friends to mark the beginning of his married life.

Antony, who attended Wat-

ford Grammar School and then university in Birmingham, photographs all types of special occasions from weddings to corporate events. Find out more at www.3Aphotography.com

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

A bad year for the French

Now that democracy has been put back in the shed with the broken toys, fairy lights and empty paint tins we can get on with the serious business of xenophobia. And few years have been better than this year for annoying the French. Why? Because 2015 is the anniversary of lots of things the French really don't want to be reminded of.

Take a random pick of the dates, starting with June 1940, the 'Miracle' of Dunkirk at the end of May and the abject capitulation of the French three weeks later. OK, so the French got to keep half of France for a couple of years, but in Petain France had its own dictator and 'friend of the Germans'. No wonder they don't like being reminded of it anymore than Channel Islanders like being reminded of their own co-operation with the occupying Germans.

If you go back further there is always 1415 and the destruction of the French nobility at Agincourt, an event that comes with a Shakespeare play, Larry Olivier and something about tennis balls. It wasn't just that, but imagine watching the pride of your nobility, schooled in the ways of genteel warfare, being mown down by a bunch of English peasants with bows and arrows. Not exactly a fun time for the French.

On a different tack there is always 1805, Nelson, Trafalgar, the destruction of the French navy and the end of Napoleon's dreams of invasion. And naturally we Brits decided to make the main square in central London a permanent memorial to the one-eyed, one-armed admiral. Must go down a storm in Paris.

The big one for the French is lumbering over the horizon on 18 June. Yes, folks, it's the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Even today the French talk about a total disaster as 'un Waterloo' whereas we think about an Abba song. If that's not bad enough the Brits decided that it was in fabulously good taste to have the terminus for Eurostar (in the days before St Pancras) at Waterloo. It's probably why when the French think about 18 June they think about 1940 and General De Gaulle's call for Frenchmen to join the Free French and liberate the country. And who can blame them?

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- **Ladies Keep Fit Class** for over 50s. Tues 10.30–11.30am at Tetherdown Hall. Sheila 8444 0084.
- **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 0433.
- **Pilates** in East Finchley, qualified teacher. Contact Dee on 8883 7029
- **Pilates class** Weds 3.30 & 7pm at Ann Owens Ctr, N2. Call Penny 8444 2882.
- **Pilates Classes** Tue 9.30, Fri 9.15 & Sun 11am. www.pilatesineastfinchley.co.uk. Michelle 07767 804 564
- **Tai Chi & Qigong** in N2, Weds 1pm. James 8883 3308/07836 710281 or james@taiji.co.uk
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- **Women's kick boxing**, Thursdays 9.30am, East Finchley Combat Academy, Church Lane, N2. Contact 07956 340540.

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- **Art Classes**. Call Henry on 8888 5133.
- **A-Chord**, friendly choir, all genres, open to all. Thursdays 8pm at NNLS, East End Rd. Laura 07732 120464. www.a-chord.uk
- **Ballroom & Latin American Dance Classes** - beginners & improvers. Wed & Fri eve, Bishop Douglass Sch. 8207 2323.
- **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- **East Finchley Writers Group**, Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Ralph 8444 5903.
- **East Finchley Poetry Writing Workshops**. Monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- **Gospel choir**, St Mary's, 279 High Road, N2, Thursdays 7-8pm, all welcome. Contact Sandra 07866 479913.
- **Memory Lane Singing Club** - friendly singing club meets every Friday in Finchley. Call Valerie 8458 4508.
- **Over 50s Tea Dance** at Christ Church, North Finchley. Every Weds, 1pm. 020 8444 0280.
- **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards La. Call 8888 4412.
- **Muswell Hill after school ukulele club**, Wednesdays 4.15-5.15pm, ages 6-10. Contact Margie 07909 439513.
- **Traditional music at TOC**, Highgate Hill, on 1st & 3rd Tues each month from 8.30pm. Free. 07958 282898.

Clubs & Social

- **Bingo evening**, 8pm Sundays, at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2.
- **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9 pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5452
- **French conversation** in small friendly group with native speaker. 8444 9395.
- **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or 8883 7544.
- **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Moldon on 8361 1696.
- **Muslim Ladies Lunch Club** 1st & 3rd Weds, Ann Owen Ctr., Oak La. Call 8432 1415 to book.
- **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- **Bridge Club**, every Saturday 1.30-4pm, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. Contact Ray Tiano 07944 562180.
- **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tues 1-3 pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Anita 8886 6140.
- **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390



Classroom to grass-room: Learning in the Academy garden.

Students welcome in wildlife

Students at the Archer Academy are working to transform the area behind the school close to the tube station into an eco-garden and outdoor classroom, with the support of the school's Friends Association and local minicab company GLH.

The Eco-Mission Action Team have drafted a plan with the aim of attracting more wildlife such as butterflies and birds, to help with pollination and increase the biodiversity of the school. They have made bird boxes, created bug hotels and raised beds for wild flowers, and planted fruit trees provided by the Friends Association. Sustainability expert Shelley Bartlett, whose time was donated by GLH, has run biodiversity mapping workshops with the

students to support their plans.

Head of Science Ms Mahmood, who is running the project as part of the school's enrichment programme, says: "It's a brilliant opportunity for students to learn about the environment with real hands on experience."

Zoe Powers, speaking for GLH, added: "We are incredibly impressed at how the plans have developed and look forward to being part of the project's development as the seasons pass."

Big names in Suburb festival

The countdown has begun for this year's Proms at St Jude's. Tickets are now on sale for all the events at the nine-day festival of music and literature which starts on Saturday 20 June.

Jazz singer Clare Teal and her mini big band will be one of the star names at the event in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

There will be opera and classical music and a special treat from Maureen Lipman narrating *Wonderland*, the London premiere of a musical tribute to Alice in Wonderland creator Lewis Carroll.

The line-up for the LitFest, which runs on the weekend of 20-21 June, includes Vladimir Putin's "No1 enemy" Bill Browder, former Labour Minister Alan Johnson, Boris Johnson's father Stanley, BBC maths wizard Alex Bellos, Hampstead Garden Suburb resident and thriller writer Michael Ridpath and political journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown.

Daily guided heritage walks will include a look at the Suburb's artisan quarter to examine



Singing at St Jude's: Clare Teal.

Photo by Steve Cockram

its history during the Blitz and a tour of Golders Hill Park and Hampstead Heath Extension will show how Suburb founder Dame Henrietta Barnett helped save them from developers.

To book tickets online or become a Friend, visit www.promsatstjudes.org.uk. General enquiries: 020 3322 8123.

Summer theatre

Full Circle children's theatre company will be running their Summer Workshop again in July. This well-established local theatre company is run by qualified teachers, offering music, dance and drama to children aged six to 16 years.

If you love to sing, dance and act in a friendly, inclusive environment then go along for a fun-packed, creative week culminating in a performance to friends and family on the last day. The workshop runs 10am to 3pm at Martin Primary School from 27-31 July. Cost is £80 for the week. To book a place or for further information contact Anne-Marie on 07958 409863.

What's On...

E-mail your listings to: the-archer@lineone.net

Sunday 7 June

- **Inaugural Race the Neighbours** 10k event. Route starts and finishes in Cherry Tree Wood, taking in Highgate Woods and Alexandra Palace. More details at www.racetheneighbours.com

Tuesday 9 June

- **HADAS (Hendon and District Archaeological Society) AGM**, 7.45pm at Stephens (Avenue) House, N3 3QE, Tel: 020 8346 7812. Followed by *The Roman Pottery Manufacturing Site in Highgate Wood*, a talk by Harvey Sheldon. All welcome.

Saturday 13 June

- **Wild Flower and Pollinators Day**, Long Lane Pasture, opposite the Fire Station, Long Lane, 10am to noon.
- **Highgate Fair in the Square**, Pond Square, 12.30pm to 5.30pm. Circus theme this year with stalls, fair rides, Morris dancers, Punch & Judy and the ever-popular Sheep Show. Free admission.
- **HGS Horticultural Society Summer Flower Show**, 3pm to 5.30pm, Free Church Hall, Northway, NW11. Lovely countryside sights and scents, teas, raffle. Fancy dress and fancy hats competitions.

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June

- **Open Garden Squares weekend** at Stephens House, East End Road, N3. Bothy Gardens will be open from 10am to 5pm, with tea and cakes being served and the return of the Secret Garden.

Sunday 14 June

- **Car boot and table top sale** at Vale Farm Allotments, off Tarring Road, N2, from 11am

to 4pm. Bargains to buy, advice from plot holders, and refreshments.

- **Caroline and David Broome open their garden** at 79 Church Lane, N2, from 2pm to 6pm. Afternoon tea and homemade cakes on offer, with plants for sale and a raffle. Entrance is £3.50, children free, with all proceeds to the National Gardens Scheme.
- **Free concert at East Finchley Methodist Church**, High Road, N2, opposite Creighton Avenue, 7.30pm. Viola da Cunha, mezzo, Andrew Whittaker, soprano, and Yuki Osedo, piano, in a light-hearted programme of solos and duets. Composers include Liszt, Gershwin, Debussy, Diack, Brahms, Villa-Lobos, Rossini, Roe and Berlin. Free admission with collection in aid of Friend in Need, East Barnet. Fully accessible venue.

- **Whatalife!** New play performed by Lucy Stevens with musical accompaniment telling the story of Kathleen Ferrier, from debut as a singer in 1940 to early death in 1953. Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park, Highgate Hill, London, N6 5HG, at 7pm. Tickets available from 07444 637055 or whatalife.ticketsource.co.uk

Friday 19 June

- **Open day at Meadowside Care Home**, Holden Road, N12. Live entertainment, coffee morning, art exhibition, barbecue at lunchtime and seminars on dementia and paying for care. More details from www.nationalcarehomeopenday.org.uk

Saturday 20 June

- **Highgate Choral Society Jumble Sale**,

St. George's Church Hall N10, corner of Cranley Garden and Park Road, N10, 2-4pm; admission 40p. Clothes, Nearly New, Bric-a-brac, electrical goods, household goods, toys and games, books, CDs & DVDs, plants, tombola, teas. Many bargains!

From Saturday 20 June

- **Proms at St Jude's** music and literary festival in Hampstead Garden Suburb featuring full programme of star names. For details and to book online visit www.promsatstjudes.org.uk. General enquiries: 020 3322 8123.

Sunday 21 June

- **East Finchley Community Festival**, Cherry Tree Wood, from 12 noon to 6pm. Procession at 11.30am from Martin Primary School, down the High Road. Two stages of live entertainment, fun family activities and plenty of food and drink stalls. Free admission. Come to the East Finchley event of the year!
- **Gardening Day at Stephens House**, East End Road, N3. Volunteers welcome 11am-1pm and/or 2-4pm to help maintain the gardens. Meet outside the café.
- **Ghost walk** with City of London guide Paul Baker. Special summer solstice ghost walk through High Barnet and Monken Hadley, second most haunted village in England. Meet 7.30pm, High Barnet tube station. More details from Paul on 020 8440 6805 and www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net

Thursday 25 June

- **The Finchley Society** hosts *A Dip into*

the Archives, plus their AGM, 8pm at Stephens (Avenue) House, N3 3QE, Tel: 020 8346 7812. Non-members very welcome. Admission £2.

Sunday 28 June

- **Suburb Open Gardens** in aid of North London Hospice and HGS Horticultural Society, 2-6 pm. Tickets/maps £7.50 available from 12 noon at Fellowship House, Willifield Way, NW11 (opposite Willifield Green). Refreshments and plants for sale at Fellowship House from 12 noon.

- **High Barnet: guided walk** through 1,000 years of history with City of London guide Paul Baker. Meet 2.30pm, Barnet College, Wood Street, High Barnet. More details from Paul on 020 8440 6805 or www.barnetwalk.talktalk.net

Until Sunday 28 June

- **World premiere of There's a Guy Works Down the Chip Shop Swears He's Elvis**, a new play with musical hits from the 1960s and 1980s. Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate, Tuesdays to Saturdays at 7.30pm, Sunday matinees at 4pm. Box office: 020 8340 3488 or www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com

Saturday 4 July

- **Fortismere Community Orchestra** concert, St Andrew's Church, Alexandra Park Road, Muswell Hill, 7.30pm. Programme: Rossini Overture to L'italiana in Algeri, the Brahms Violin Concerto (soloist Rebekah Allan), and Beethoven Symphony No. 1. Conductor: Thomas Gregory. Tickets available at door.



Letters

Crazy paving

Dear Editor,

I thought the Soapbox article in praise of the newly arranged paving in front of the Muswell Hill Odeon in the April edition of The Archer was very interesting, but I would like to offer an alternative viewpoint.

Previously we had on this site a side road with free parking for visitors to Muswell Hill, and raised beds of plants, providing both greenery and somewhere for people to sit.

All we have now is off-white paving stones. If you want to park you have to drive into the Odeon car park at some expense. You can sit down outside the cafe, but only if you buy something to eat.

I wonder, did anyone ask the shopkeepers of Muswell Hill if they approved of the removal of free parking areas for potential customers? Was there any sort of survey before these changes? And who paid for it all, bearing in mind how cash-strapped our councils are supposed to be?

What it now makes me think of is an architects' model; architects are notorious for building models without anything actually useful for pedestrians or passers-by, as they apparently make the place look untidy.

Rumour has it that the whole project was intended to remove convenient areas where pupils from Fortismere School were apt to congregate during lunchtime periods and after school, socialising, eating, and, horror of horrors, apparently dropping litter!

Yes, this whole project, at a cost of I don't know how many thousands of pounds, was designed to reduce the amount of litter dropped by young students! Was anyone else aware of this?

Yours faithfully,
Pete Eiseman-Renyard
Fortis Green, N2.

Old Barn for all

Dear Editor,

Regarding the future of the Old Barn community centre (*THE ARCHER*, May 2015), there are, as far as I can tell, three areas of land under dispute: the Old Barn building; the play area; and the green woodland next to it.

I feel, as do many others in the local community that I have spoken to, that any decision to develop these areas should fit in with the desires and requirements of the surrounding neighborhood, and not be made by a committee of people representing what they feel we should have.

So far I have had no literature through the post and nobody attempting to reach out to ask me how I feel about the proposed works on these sites. Considering how this will affect the surrounding area I would have thought that this would be the first thing to action. I for one would be interested in what the

majority of residents are in favour of, and what they oppose.

One thing is clear: we cannot just sit back and let this area degenerate any more. How long will it be before the Old Barn becomes a potential target for squatters; how long before there is an accident at the rotting, decaying play area because children climb through the hole in the fence, or the back gate to the park area, held up by a piece of string, breaks and falls onto the public footpath?

As has been echoed in many other letters in *THE ARCHER*, I would like this area to benefit not one single community, but all of us. Reopen the Old Barn, build a park for the children that complements the Newstead Nursery and create a space that breathes a bit of life into the area.

Yours faithfully,
Oliver Jude,
Lucas Gardens, N2.

Avenue character destroyed

Dear Editor,

I am writing in support of Ian Cormack's Soapbox column in the May issue of *THE ARCHER*. The Bishops Avenue is comprised of very large, expensively luxurious properties, constantly being rebuilt in ever more incongruous and flashy styles, not in keeping with the traditional English large houses which were built in the Avenue from its construction in 1887 by famous architects of the day.

There is little outward sign of community along The Avenue, with privacy, exclusion and security dominating recent developments. Many houses are kept empty except for caretakers round the back. As Mr. Cormack observes, this is happening all over central London. Land and properties being kept out of use by foreign investors should be subject to a Land Tax or Rent which could be put to the benefit of the local community.

The Bishops Avenue falls within the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area, designated by Barnet Council in 1968. This means that the council's efforts in the area should be geared to preserving and enhancing its special character. Why has the council not upheld its duty in this regard? Houses which have beauty and historical interest, be they large or small, should be preserved for ensuing generations.

Yours faithfully,
Primrose Chamberlin,
Leicester Road, N2.

Get in gear for cycling breakout



Breakout - Chain reaction: Riders get ready to set out on last year's Suburban Breakout. Photo by Jim Brown of Stevenage CTC.

By Nick Bloom

It's time once more for East Finchley's annual cycling challenge, the 100 kilometre Suburban Breakout on Sunday 12 July, organised by Central London CTC, with help from Barracuda Cafe and Bike & Run on the High Road.

The route is a fairly easy spin into Hertfordshire with one or two little lumps, but push hard or take it steady, it's not a race. Your speed overall must be above 15km/h, no more than 30km/h. It's an ideal 'first event', and a good 'first on fixed', as well as being a pleasant training ride for those doing Ride London soon after.

This is an audax event, so it's about getting round under your own steam. You have to follow the route sheet (no signs), and sort out any mechanicals (no broom wagon). There are no timing chips, no gold medals, but there is a fine cup of coffee when you get back.

The start is at Barracuda Café, 118 High Road, N2, at 9.30am, but please turn up in good time, especially if you have not entered. Advance entry £7, on the day £10.

For more information, routesheet, map and entry forms please see the website www.centrallondonctc.org.uk/audax. You can also contact the organiser Nick Bloom by email at nick@centrallondonctc.org.uk and by phone on 07768 354010, or pop in to Bike & Run on the High Road for advice.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.

Take back the city

By Sam Grove

On Saturday 9 May a campaign called Take Back the City was launched in East London. The campaigners are ordinary people who believe that London has become a city run in the exclusive interests of a tiny minority of rich people at the expense of the majority and who are committed to bring London back under democratic control.

The idea is to create a popular people-led movement that can build a set of radical demands that will make London more democratic and inclusive.

East Finchley in the 1980s and 1990s was quite poor when compared to other areas in North London very close by. But it had a rich sense of community. We had youth centres, a football club, a community festival. There were things to do for everyone regardless of wealth. As house prices have soared, East Finchley has become much richer financially, but is poorer in terms of its community.

In spite of the changes, East Finchley has managed to resist the erosion of its community in a way that many other areas have been unable to.

We did this when the Tory Council tried to ban our Community Festival. We did it again in blocking the opening of a Waitrose and the closing of our public library. We still have our festival, our newspaper and a High Road full of local shops.

By teaming up with broader campaigns across London the voices of ordinary Londoners can be heard. If you are interested in getting involved email info@takebackthecity.org or visit the website www.takebackthecity.org

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June at the Phoenix

By Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, Phoenix Cinema executive director

This month your favourite community cinema is blooming with great cinematic choices for your viewing pleasure.

'Sunday Best', our monthly one-off afternoon series of films we love but couldn't otherwise fit into the schedule, offers *Girlhood* on 7 June. Director Celine Sciamma's raw, tender depiction of an all girl gang on the gritty outskirts of Paris tells it like it is, in French.

Our main features this month start off with *Danny Collins*, glowing with a terrific central performance by Al Pacino as an ageing rock musician. At the opposite end of the tonal spectrum is *Timbuktu*, set in Mali. It's a lyrical indictment of the enemies of joy; a film bound to provoke conversation.

For the week starting 12 June we stay firmly rooted in England. John Boorman's follow up to *Hope and Glory* finds our young hero embarking on basic training in 1952 to hilarious results in *Queen and Country*. Then comes *London Road*, a musical about grisly true crimes in Ipswich a decade ago, with a cast including Tom Hardy and Olivia Colman.

We're not cheating on our new patron Benedict Cumberbatch, by showing the new film *Mr. Holmes*, starring Sir Ian McKellen as an aged Sherlock: we're just crazy about those fabulous Baker Street boys!

So many good films, so little time. That's why we're giving audiences three options in the last week of the month. One of

the most atmospheric films ever made, *The Third Man*, leads the pack, with iconic performances by Orson Welles and Joseph Cotten. *Shooting for Socrates* is an endearing film set in Belfast just before the 1986 World Cup. *The Look of Silence* bears witness to 50 years of silence in Indonesia and the effect it's had on one family.

Our Saturday morning Kids' Club activities and screenings are always popular with our younger audiences, and a great bargain at only £3 for hours of fun. We're especially pleased this month to partner with the Proms at St. Jude's (www.promsatstjudes.org.uk) in a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's classic story. Bring the whole family on the 27th to watch Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Full details are on our website: www.phoenixcinema.co.uk. See you at the movies!

The Reader Book group

Every Friday from 10.30am to 12 noon, at The Bald Faced Stag you'll find a reading group with a difference!

Short stories, serialised novels, poetry, plays...share them together, with members reading aloud (strictly optional). No need to hunt out and read beforehand. All texts supplied on the spot by The Reader Organisation. Drop in and make new friends.

What do you mean, a funny book about brain cancer?

By John Lawrence

"I'm no crusader," says Adam Blain, who has written a book on how he is facing up to a rare and aggressive brain tumour, "but it's quite empowering to laugh in the face of cancer."

The 45-year-old lawyer, who lives in Bedford Road, says he didn't set out with a mission but the process of scribbling down his thoughts on the highs and lows of living with the disease and then turning them into a self-published book has helped him through the year since he received his dreadful diagnosis.

His short read, titled *Pear Shaped: The Funniest Book So Far This Year About Brain Cancer*, is available to download on Amazon.co.uk and on any device with the Kindle app. Judging from the mass of five-star reviews there, it's been a revelation to readers, fellow sufferers included.

"There are plenty of books out there on cancer but not much humour," Adam tells *THE*



Adam with his wife Lu.

ARCHER. "Cancer is losing its taboo status and we shouldn't be scared of making jokes. I'm laughing death in the face, not by design, but I just have a gallops sense of humour."

"It's a bit gruesome and gory in places, with the surgery and treatment I've had. But I've had so many emails of appreciation from readers."

Green bananas still ok

Adam, who is married to oncologist Lucinda Melcher and has three children Jonah, 12, Sacha, nine, and Thea, five, was told that patients like him with Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM) could count their life expectancy

in months. About one in 20 will survive.

As he puts it in the book: "The surgeon was not so upbeat about my statistics and he advised against buying Christmas cards several years in advance although he didn't get to the stage where I was advised against buying green bananas."

He is receiving treatment and is still working full time, something he says he really enjoys and is good for him. A sequel to his book is being considered but he knows it's a lot of work and his cancer doesn't often leave him with the energy to take it on.



Still smiling: Adam during treatment

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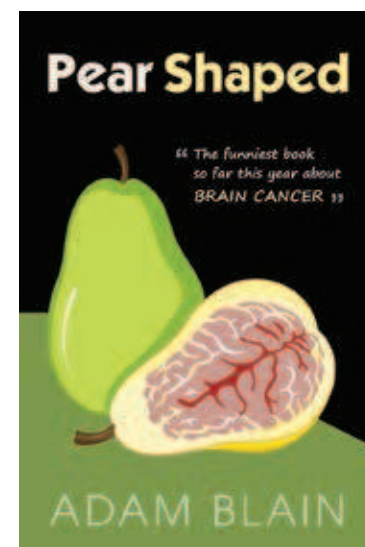
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Reviews of his publication on Amazon say: "Very moving and thought-provoking, yet screamingly funny" and "Has reminded me to try and live life as directed by Adam: one day at a time, getting as much as you can out of every single hour."

Find *Pear Shaped: The Funniest Book So Far This Year About Brain Cancer* on Amazon.co.uk for £2.99. It's highly recommended.

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